

TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION MINUTES

MARCH 22, 2006

Chair Knox White called the Transportation Commission to order at 7:30 p.m.

1. **ROLL CALL** – Roll was called and the following recorded:

Members Present:

John Knox White
Eric Schatmeier
Michael Krueger
Robert McFarland

Absent:

Robb Ratto
Pattianne Parker
Jeff Knoth

Staff Present:

Barbara Hawkins, City Engineer
Barry Bergman, Program Specialist II, Public Works

2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Chair Knox White moved the approval of the February minutes to next meeting.

Commissioner Schatmeier had a question regarding the motion by Commissioner Knoth about the required capacity on Atlantic Avenue.

Chair Knox White indicated that this could be clarified under item 6A on the agenda, when the Northern Waterfront DEIR is discussed.

3. **AGENDA CHANGES**

None.

4. **COMMISSION COMMUNICATIONS**

Chair Knox White mentioned that at the ILC meeting Councilmember Matarresse asked AC Transit to come and address the TC on the 51 bus bunching issue. AC Transit will be collecting data why it's happening at certain times and will try to bring that to the TC in May. He also noted that representatives of the Alameda Point Collaborative spoke on behalf of Lifeline funding to continue operations of the 63 bus service for Alameda Point.

Staff Hawkins added that the Congestion Management Agency (CMA) has redirected the funding that has been used for the Alameda Point service to certain Census tracts, so AC Transit is

looking for another funding source to maintain this service on the 63. She indicated that to ensure that this happens it will be helpful to make recommendations to the CMA.

Chair Knox White said that only two Census tracts identified are in southwest Berkeley and Cherryland, so that in the first round the CMA will be accepting applications for other locations as well.

Chair Knox White noted that the ILC also discussed concerns about buses using the High Street Bridge. Residents are opposed to the noise from the buses using the bridge, while AC Transit is concerned about the additional cost that would be incurred by redirecting them to less direct routes. AC Transit has asked the City to identify how it would like the deadhead buses to be dealt with. Councilmember Matarrese has indicated that he will ask the Council to direct this issue to the TC for recommendations.

5. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Jean Sweeney commented on the plan to convert diagonal parking to parallel parking on Central Ave. between Walnut and Oak. She stated that this will increase the difficulty in finding parking at the Veterans Building when there are evening functions, and that she has discussed this with a number of people active in veterans activities who have expressed this concern. While there is a lot in the back of the building, the Recreation and Parks Dept. keep their vehicles there. Ms. Sweeney also stated that it would be helpful to have more than one handicapped space in front of the building, as it is difficult for some people to walk a long distance to the building. She asked the Commission for its assistance with this situation.

Bill Smith suggested the development of an “eco-destination resort” at Alameda Landing to minimize the number of vehicles that would use the site.

6A. Northern Waterfront General Plan Amendment and Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR)

Chair Knox White stated that the purpose of having this item on the agenda was to review the TC’s original recommendations for the Northern Waterfront GPA, as well as to review the recommendations made regarding the DEIR at the March meeting.

Public Comment

Jean asked if the TC was proposing to extend any streets through the Beltline property.

Chair Knox White had said that the TC was not proposing the construction of any streets.

Close Public Comment

<p><i>Commissioner Kruger</i> moved to adopt a clarification regarding item 1, so that the recommendation would read: “Establish a Northern Waterfront District Transit District or</p>

amend the Citywide Development Fee Ordinance to fund expanded Northern Waterfront transit services in corridors through and between the Northern Waterfront and the high ridership generators inside and outside the City such as Oakland BART stations, airport, transit hubs, etc.” *Commissioner Schatmeier* seconded. Motion passed unanimously, 4-0.

Chair Knox White noted that the TC had recommended deleting the following policies:

- 10.6.j – Prohibit extension of north/south residential streets through the Alameda Beltline railyard site.
- PS-3 – Provide primary access to this site shall be from Sherman Street.

Chair Knox White suggested clarification of the deletion of 10.6.j to indicate that the TC does not want to advocate for extending streets through the former Belt Line railyard, but to indicate that the intention is to not have high-capacity through streets through the site. He suggested that the GPA’s recommended prohibition on extending the streets be deleted in case a new land use scenario emerges for the site.

Commissioner Krueger emphasized that in support of the General Plan, the TC doesn’t want to increase through traffic capacity. He stated that his primary concern is connectivity.

Several suggestions were made regarding clarifying language but no motions were passed.

Chair Knox White suggested leaving the recommendation to delete the policy.

Commissioner Krueger moved to correct Item 5 to read: “Facilitate use of Clement Street as a major east west corridor through the City and to remove traffic volume from other east west streets such as Buena Vista and Lincoln by prioritizing efforts to extend Clement from Sherman Street to Tilden. *Commissioner Schatmeier* seconded. Motion passed unanimously, 4-0.

The Commission then discussed the DEIR recommendations approved at the March 22 TC meeting. *Chair Knox White* stated that regarding the recommendations for the DEIR, he wanted to be careful to focus on clarifications of what was approved at the previous meeting, since the current meeting had only four members in attendance.

Chair Knox White moved that that the previously approved motion 1 regarding the EIR report be clarified as follows: With the EIR’s proposal to convert Atlantic to four lanes, the TC feels that the recommendation is not consistent with General Plan policy 4.1.c of the City’s General Plan, “Do not increase through-traffic capacity on the Main Island.” *Commissioner Schatmeier* seconded. Motion passed unanimously, 4-0.

Chair Knox White said that regarding the proposed extension of Clement, the issue is the turning radius from Park onto Clement and its impact on truck traffic. The City would need to take two houses and a funeral home, and the feasibility of this is unknown. Therefore, it’s not a fixable solution. The TC wanted to highlight the ability to mitigate this. He stated that the Council may want staff to look at other truck route options to make avoid this problem.

Staff Hawkins said that the proposed extension would not take the funeral home but only a couple of parking spaces. In addition, she said that there is a level of service issue at Clement and Park, so there would need to be a capacity enhancement to address this.

Commissioner McFarland stated that his understanding is that the capacity issues are the primary concern, not the truck route.

Chair Knox White suggested removing the previously recommended language that Council should direct staff and just say that the TC recommends that the City Council prioritize the connection of Clement to Tilden. He noted that the intention of the recommendation is to help ensure the City make a commitment to this project while reviewing the impacts discussed in the EIR.

Staff Hawkins said that when it goes to project level EIR, if it's not feasible that it would impact the development of a specific project. Therefore the feasibility of the proposed extension would be discussed as part of a project level EIR.

Chair Knox White said that he wanted to respect the wishes of Commissioner Parker, as she raised this issue and was not in attendance, and recommended keeping this recommendation as is.

Chair Knox White asked about the tube capacity, which *Commissioner McFarland* had raised at the March meeting.

Staff Bergman said that the handouts discussed the assumptions, as well as indicating the hour by hour traffic counts in the year 2000.

Chair Knox White asked if the calculated capacity takes into account the fact that there are stop lights on either end of the tube or just assumes free flow and go on forever.

Staff Bergman said that he had talked to Virendra Patel on that and said that the signal on the Oakland side has a very short cycle as well as a free right turn, so there is not much impact on the capacity of the Posey Tube. He noted that on the Webster tube there is a pretty long distance between the exit from the tube and the traffic signals. There is also a split at Constitution, providing additional lanes and capacity.

Commissioner Schatmeier said that he was confused about the traffic volume and trip generation. The supporting material chart shows trips and vehicle capacity in the tubes but that it doesn't necessarily correlate to trip generation. He asked if the materials could be clarified to indicate where we are talking about person trips and where we are talking about vehicle trips.

Commissioner Krueger agreed, stating that the focus should be on maximizing mobility for people, not just vehicles.

Commissioner Krueger suggested adding a clarifying statement to be submitted along with the TC's recommendation about policies to be deleted, which was discussed earlier.

Commissioner Krueger moved to include the following explanatory text to accompany the TC's recommendation to delete policies 10.6.j and PS-3 from the GPA: "These two policies prohibit full use and/or any future extension of the Alameda grid system. Depending on the future outcome of the ballot initiatives for the Alameda Beltline property or the future development plans for the Pacific Storage property, extension of the grid may not be necessary or desirable. However, until the future uses are established for these two sites, the General Plan should not prohibit any future consideration of access to the Pacific Storage or the Beltline site from the north-south streets in the grid." *Commissioner Schatmeier* seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously, 4-0.

Chair Knox White asked to discuss the right of way for the proposed rail transit, and referred to the cross-section drawings from the Cross Alameda Trail Feasibility Study.

Staff Hawkins stated that staff looked at the constraints of the roadway system on both sides and looking at both the existing Clement and connecting into Atlantic. This included a look at potential cross-sections from Main to Tilden to see how the different modes of transportation could be accommodated. This also included the geometrics of a road that would be constructed between Sherman and Clement, so even though this is a preliminary proposal, it is based on pretty refined measurements.

Staff Hawkins said that the original light rail study did not get to the refined level that was done in the trail feasibility study. She noted that San Francisco is currently using a rail system that has shared turning lanes with vehicles but doesn't have shared through lanes.

Commissioner McFarland said that it is possible to get 15 minute headways for a rail service even if there is a mile of single tracking.

Commissioner Krueger questioned whether Clement is the best right-of-way for a potential rail corridor.

Commissioner McFarland also noted that space would be required for stations. He suggested that if rail were implemented in this corridor, it should probably be operated in the street, shared with vehicle traffic.

Chair Knox White said that the TC has a concern that the right of way that is being discussed in this plan could have operational issues. He suggested that another route for the rail might have to be considered. *Commissioner Krueger* agreed.

Staff Hawkins said that it is difficult to protect right-of-way because of the various competing needs for things such as development, transportation, parking, and shoreline access. She noted that there is a pinch point between the developer's property and a retaining wall near the water by the Encinal Terminals site. It is difficult to determine how much space should be set aside without knowing the operational demands, and it could be costly. She stated that additional analysis would be needed to provide some of this information.

Commissioner McFarland stated that the TC shouldn't preclude the possibility of having the system run in the street as opposed to an exclusive right-of-way, as this may actually be more appropriate.

Chair Knox White moved that the City, when accepting the General Plan Amendment, needs to be aware the transit right away that is referred to is a single track shared right of way with turn lanes and automobile traffic. The Transportation Commission is concerned that the amount of single track right of way from the Fruitvale Bridge to Sherman could possibly limit effective transit operations. *Commissioner Schatmeier* seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously, 4-0.

Chair Knox White asked about the "scattered residential properties" referred to in the report. *Staff Hawkins* pointed them out on the map for clarification.

7A. Pedestrian Plan

Chair Knox White asked what the timeline was and that maybe at the next TC meeting discuss them.

Staff Bergman said that the Task Force meeting was held last week and overall structure was confusing to some people. The relationship between the Pedestrian and Circulation policies were confusing as to what the stand-alone Pedestrian plan document was going to look like. Maybe get feedback from the TC as to how to put the two together.

Chair Knox White asked said that should talk more on the structure at the next months TC meeting as to how to put the policies together.

Staff Bergman said that 4 basic goals were established as part of the Circulation Plan with objectives and policies underneath those. The question is what would a stand-alone Pedestrian Plan include. He distributed a copy of the policies previously approved by the TC which indicated policies most relevant to the Pedestrian Plan.

Staff Hawkins said that the Task Force should not be relied on to develop the policy language but to provide feedback and endorse the final product.

Chair Knox White said that after the next meeting their recommendations will go to the boards and commissions for approval and comments.

Staff Bergman said that it maybe May or June to bring the project before the TC committee.

8. STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

Staff Bergman explained that the bus shelter survey was extended a little longer than originally proposed and that about 250 responses were received. The consultant will be wrapping it up sometime next week and then will get an analysis on it to present at the next meeting.

Staff Bergman noted that the Request for Qualifications did receive some proposals in the process of evaluating them and then will have a work scope put together to complete the Circulation Plan.

Staff Bergman stated that the Alameda Landing project was originally going to be presented to a joint meeting of the TC and Economic Development Commission, but these will instead be handled separately. The TC will likely have the opportunity to discuss this project in April.

Staff Hawkins noted that the proposed CIP is posted on the City's web site. She noted that this includes proposed projects, deferred projects, and project descriptions. She noted that the TC recommendations are not included, because CIP was broken up into annual projects and capital projects. Annual projects, such as feasibility studies, will not show up in the CIP.

Commissioner Krueger asked about the bus stop/red curbs inventory. *Staff Hawkins* said Public Works is very short-staffed, but that Barry Bergman and Greg Stoia have developed a data sheet for the inventory and this effort will be moving forward.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 9:50 p.m.

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